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Expert warns U.S. against concessions

By Lou Marano
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The danger that the U.S. might make concessions in advance of the Geneva summit between President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has the nation "gliding on the rim of an abyss," said Fritz Kraemer, geostrategist, international lawyer, and for many years adviser to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Mr. Kraemer, 77, noted that in any negotiation between totalitarian and democratic leaders, the former is always at an advantage because he does not have to deal with allies, the press or public opinion.

Proposals the Soviets have made in advance of the Nov. 19-20 summit are "contemptuous" of the United States and are the kind one would make only to an adversary already considered defeated, he said during a luncheon meeting with editors and reporters at The Washington Times.

The Soviets claim that their intermediate-range missiles aimed at European cities are "non-strategic" while similar American missiles in Europe are "strategic" because they can strike the Soviet Union, he said. The longtime observer of foreign affairs also noted that many Soviet missiles are mobile and can be moved west of the Ural Mountains at a moment's notice.

The real issue will be U.S. retention of the Strategic Defense Initiative, said Mr. Kraemer, who views with disfavor Secretary of State George Shultz's pre-summit trip to Moscow next week.

"We should always be suspicious of diplomats because they have been taught to believe that there are no genuine conflicts of interest," only negotiable misunderstandings, he said. In terms of conventional power, he said, the conflict of interest between the United States and the Soviet Union is heavily tilted in favor of the communist power.

The United States has only 16 divisions, while the Soviet Union has 181, with 23 million trained reservists, 2 million of whom have had active service in the past five years, he said. In an apparent reference to U.S. refusal to renounce first use of nuclear weapons because of relative American weakness in conventional forces, Mr. Kraemer said, "There would be no [danger of] nuclear war if we had 60 divisions."

But we want security "on the cheap," said Mr. Kraemer, characterizing upper-middle class Americans reluctant to serve in the armed forces as "sheltered, unadventurous, unimaginative bourgeois who don't know what harsh reality is."

The recent vast expenditures in U.S. military hardware "has gained

us almost nothing" in real security, he said.... "Certain things cannot be done with money, only in blood."

"We are lucky," he said, "that Soviet strategy is victory without war, by intimidation." Their military buildup is aimed at the day when they can say to the West: "Look at what we have and look at what you have. Do you really want to fight?"

Noting the objection of Sen. Dave Durenberger, the Minnesota Republican who chairs the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, that he was not notified in advance of the interception of the airliner carrying the hijackers of the Achille Lauro, Mr. Kraemer said: "I have very great doubts whether democracies can survive.

"Fear is the decisive factor in international affairs," he said. "You can't cash in IOUs of sympathy and expect people to be on your side if you can't protect them. If our allies [in Central America] are allowed to bleed to death on our very front door, then it will be clear that we can't defend anyone."

Asked if the Soviet empire is in decline, Mr. Kraemer answered, "Yes, but compared to our decadence, they are still very strong." The Soviet Union is still very authoritarian, he said, but no one believes in communism as a secular religion anymore as did Lenin, Stalin and even Khrushchev.

Despite his grim predictions, Mr. Kraemer believes that in about 15 years, as the Soviet economy continues to decline and things threaten to come to a standstill, a "Russian nationalist, Christian, Dostoyevskian" leader will emerge.